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OSR file

CLA Operations Center

Subject Middle East

Date

March 16, 1978

Analyst/SDO

Distribution

O White House Spot Report

OC-WHSK-78-052

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TO: IMMEDIATE WH	ITIE HANZELLZTI	DALION KOOK	
ITEM NO: 3 SUBJECT: MIDDLE INCUR	EAST: THE POL	ATE: 16 MARCH	
THE INCURSION	HAS PREDICTAB	LY WON THE ENTH	USIASTIC SUPPORT
OF THE ISRAELI PL	JBLIC AND PRESS	•	
100M A	APPROACHING W	AR FEVER HAD DE	VELOPED IN ISRAELD
PRIOR TO THE OPER	ZAH DIA NOITAS	BEEN FOLLOWED B	Y A CATHARTIC SENSE
OF RELIEF AND PRI	IDE. THE OPPOS	ITION LABOR PAR	TY HAS RALLIED
FIRMLY BEHIND THE	E GOVERNMENT.	FORMER FOREIGN	MINISTER ALLON A
PROMINENT LABOR F	PARTY LEADER . H	AS ENDORSED THE	GOVERNMENT'S
INTENTION TO KEEP	P FORCES IN SOU	THERN LEBANON U	NTIL AN AGREEMENT
IS WORKED OUT THE	AT BARS THE RET	URN OF THE PALE	STINIAN GUERRILLAS.
THE GOVERNMEN	NT STILL FACES		QUESTIONS
OVER THE CIRCUMS	TANCES SURROUND	ING THE TERRORI	ST RAID. RUMORS
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WAS A SECURITY LA			
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THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK, HOWEVER, HAVE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY REVERSED THE EROSION IN PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S POPULAR SUPPORT.

HE IS BEING CREDITED WITH TAKING STRONG, DECISIVE ACTION. Y

BEGIN IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO TRY TO TURN THIS TO HIS ADVANTAGE

DURING HIS TALKS NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON WITH SENIOR US OFFICIALS.

SECURE AT HOME AND BANKING ON AN UPSWELLING IN SYMPATHY FOR

ISRAEL IN THE US, BEGIN PROBABLY WILL TRY TO BUILD A STRONG PUBLIC

CASE ON SECURITY GROUNDS FOR HIS DIFFERENCES WITH THE US OVER THE

SETTLEMENTS, QUESTIONS AND UN RESOLUTION 242. 4

THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF A BUFFER ZONE IN SOUTH LEBANON

PLACES SYRIA PRESIDENT ASAD IN A SERIOUS PREDICAMENT. ASAD

HAS INVESTED MUCH OF HIS PRESTIGE IN RECENT YEARS IN PROJECTING

SYRIA AS THE PROTECTOR OF THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL AS THE

DEFENDER OF LEBANON. SYRIA'S FAILURE TO ACT AGAINST THE ISRAELI

ATTACK HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION BOTH CLAIMS. Y

THE IRAGI AND EGYPTIAN PRESS HAS ALREADY TAUNTED ASAD FOR

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STANDING BY IDLY. SYRIA WILL TRY		H CHARGES BY
ACCUSING EGYPT OF ACQUIESCING IN	ISRAEL'S OCCUPAT	ION OF SOUTH
LEBANON BUT THE PRESSURE WILL MOL		
SYRIA'S PUBLIC PROMISE TO PROVIDE		
ASAD'S RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO		
ASAD WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE THE		
CONTROLLED SAIRA FORCES, TO HOLD		
SYRIAN FORCES IN CENTRAL LEBANON		z - 7
SO FAR	STNAW GAZA	TO AVOID A
DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION WI		N FORCES IN
LEBANON HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO FIR		
SYRIAN AIRCRAFT HAVE AVOIDED ENT		
SYRIA'S DEMARCHE TO THE MEMB	2	CURITY COUNCIL
REFLECTS ASAD'S DESIRE TO SOLIDI		
AN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED BUFFER ZONE.		
THE LEBANESE ARMY IS COMPLETELY		
ROLE IN THE SOUTH AND THAT THE I		
THE PALESTINIANS ARE KEPT AWAY F	ROM THE BORDER.	
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IN THE PAST THE SYRIANS HAVE RESISTED EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH

A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. BELIEVING THAT THIS

WOULD INFRINGE ON THEIR PREEMINENT POSITION IN LEBANON. ENDORSING

SUCH A FORCE MIGHT ALSO HAVE PROMPTED CHARGES THAT SYRIA

ABANDONED THE PALESTINIANS' LAST "FRONT" AGAINST ISRAEL.

NONETHELESS ASAD WOULD PROBABLY NOW FIND A UN FORCE MORE

PALATABLE THAN A CONTINUED ISRAELI PRESENCE. WITHOUT PUBLICLY

ENDORSING SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT HE MAY TACITLY ENCOURAGE THE

LEBANESE TO PURSUE IT. Y

EGYPT PRESIDENT SADAT YESTERDAY JOINED OTHER ARAB LEADERS
IN CONDEMNING ISRAELI'S ATTACK INTO LEBANON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT
ISRAEL'S SECURITY GOALS CAN BE MET ONLY BY SOLVING THE PALESTINIAN
PROBLEM, NOT BY FORCE OF ARMS. SADAT VOWED TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH
FOR PEACE. Y

OTHE EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA YESTERDAY SHARPLY

CRITICIZED "SRAEL"S "GENOCIDE" IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE SCALE OF

ITS REPRISAL. ISRAEL, NEVERTHELESS, IS STILL TREATED AS A

POTENTIAL PARTNER IN SHAPING PEACE. Y

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ISRAEL'S RAID WAS USED AS AN OCCASION TO ATTACT THE USER AND SYRIA WHICH WERE RIDUCULED FOR THE CRAVEN REACTION. THE US RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION PENDING A US OFFICIAL STATEMENT. EGYPT CLEARLY EXPECTS THE US TO CONDEMN THE ISRAELI ACTION AND TO LEAD DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SECURE ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWL FROM

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